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THE RECENT OUTRAGE AT THE TAIERI GOLDFIELDS.

George Buzzon, William Sydney Helvin. George Paxton, and Edward Jones, were charged by Sergeant Nagle with being idle and disorderly persons, and having no lawful visible means of support. Mr O'Loughlin appeared for Jones and Paxton, and said he was engaged to defend them on the charge of robbery, and he was taken by surprise at this alteration in the information to that of vagrancy. John Nagle, sworn, stated: 'I am-sergeant of police stationed at, the Taieri. About dark on the evening of Saturday, the 7th inst., I was on duty at the: digging. I saw Buzzon, Helvin and another man, named Smith (who is now committed for trial on another charge of assault with intent to murder) in company. Previous to this, I saw Paxton and Jones together. I remained lying in the grass until about 11 o'clock. I then returned to the barracks about 12 o'clock. I came out in uniform, and saw a man like Paxton along with Buzzon, Smith, and Helvin. I went up and said you had better go home, it is getting late. I am not quite positive about Paxton's identity. I then went towards the camp and when within a few yards of the camp. I heard the cries of "murder and police" proceeding from the direction where I had parted with the prisoners. I immediately returned, and meeting two men they informed me that they had been thrown down and an attempt had been made to rob one of the men of his watch. They said they had been attacked by two men each. One of them pointed out marks on his throat, by which he had been seized. I pursued the prisoners, going round several stores and tents. As I was passing between two tents, I heard one person saying to another, "I'd have had the by watch. "I'd had had the b - - y watch only for the bobby coming along". I went to the front of the tent and looked in. I saw, George Smith standing about a yard distant from Jones, Buzzon, and another man, not in custody. I heard Jones say "you are making too much noise about the d— d row." With the assistance of two constables, I arrested Jones Buzzon, and Smith; Jones and Buzzon resisted, but with the assistance of some diggers, we succeeded in taking them to the lock-up. Sometime afterwards, I met Helvin and Paxton coming from behind some tents, and having seen them in company with the other prisoners in the early part of the evening, I arrested them. Cross-examined by Mr O'Loughlin - "I had not seen Jones at the Taieri diggings previous to the 6th inst. I cannot positively swear to Paxton because the man I believe to have been him, had his hat over his eyes. I arrested the men on suspicion of garrotting. When I entered, I saw Buzzon, Jones and another man whispering together: Bastings, proprietor of the Robin Hood Hotel, said: "I know the prisoner Jones and another man, whom I saw in gaol yesterday. The last time I saw them was about three weeks ago. They had revolvers and neddies in their swags. These belonged to the company which Jones and the other men belonged, as there were no other men in the house."

James Farrell sworn, stated - "I am a Detective' officer. I know the prisoners Jones (alias Croft), and Paxton I have known Jones since 29th of April last, when he arrived in Dunedin, having been sent down from Lake Wakatipu in custody. On 13th October he was discharged from gaol. Since then, I have seen him several times in different parts of the town in company with other convicted thieves. Jones had not done any work since then, he was lounging about public houses and brothels. On the 28th October I saw Jones in a tent inhabited by two other prisoners, now in custody, under bed in which I found a neddy upon which there was human hair and blood and ropes and caps. I know Paxton since 1st October and I never saw or knew him to do any work. I am certain he omitted a robbery there of four ten pound notes. He was sent down to Dunedin for being a ticket-of-leave man from Victoria. He was then known as Edward Jones and he admitted to me that his name was John Croft."

Mr. O'Loughlin, on behalf of the prisoner Jones contended that the fact of his having been once convicted, was a bar to his reformation; and as regarded Paxton, there was not a tittle of evidence by which he could be connected either for the charge of assault or that of vagrancy.

For Paxton he called the following witnesses: -

William Henry Cox, who, sworn, stated - "I am a storeman residing at Wetherstones. I know the prisoner Paxton. He was in our store on the 17th October; he used to deal with us. He was working on a very good claim and bore a very good character." Wallington said "I am proprietor of Glasgow arms restaurant in McClaggan Street. I know Paxton. He was staying at my house about the 20th of last month. He gave me L240 to take charge of." The magistrate thought that there was no evidence to connect Paxton with this charge, but he was taken into custody for being in the with at least one suspicious character, and he should advise him in future to be more careful in the choice of his mates. He intended this as friendly advice. Discharged. His Worship did not think there was sufficient evidence to convict Helvin and Buzzon under this charge; they were accordingly discharged. As to the prisoner Jones he was sentenced at this Court to four months' imprisonment some time ago and he did not appear to have

reformed his ways. The account given of his means of support were not satisfactory. He would give him another chance, however, and inflict a lenient sentence. Sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour.